

## **Delta Stewardship Council DRAFT Charge to the Delta Independent Science Board**

A Delta Independent Science Board (Delta ISB) is called for in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009 (Delta Reform Act). The Delta Reform Act establishes the Board, whose members are to be appointed by the Delta Stewardship Council (Council). The purpose of the Delta ISB is to review the application of science and the effectiveness of science practices throughout the Delta as outlined in this Charge to the Delta ISB. The objective of Delta ISB oversight is to help make the science underlying Bay-Delta programs, the application of that science, and the technical aspects of those programs the best that they can be.

The specific charge for the Delta ISB, including elements written in statute under the Delta Reform Act and additional elements needed to fulfill statutory requirements, is as follows:

### **Delta Reform Act**

1. Provide oversight of the scientific research, monitoring, and assessment programs that support adaptive management of the Delta through periodic reviews of each of those programs that shall be scheduled to ensure that all Delta scientific research, monitoring, and assessment programs are reviewed at least once every four years.
2. Submit to the council a report on the results of each review, including recommendations for any changes in programs reviewed by the Delta ISB.
3. Consult with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) on the Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) as well as review the draft environmental impact report for BDCP and submit comments to the Council and DFG.
4. Recommend a Delta Lead Scientist to be appointed by the Council. Work closely with the Council to provide a recommendation for the lead scientist to be appointed by the Council.

### **Additional Elements**

5. Understand the technical underpinnings of Delta programs and plans, including the Delta Interim Plan and the Delta Plan. As a group, the Delta ISB should attain and sustain an up-to-date understanding of the Council's and other state and local agencies' proposed actions and the state of the science applicable to those actions.
6. Regularly evaluate the science agenda for the Delta. Provide evaluation of the implementation of a strategic, balanced, and proactive science agenda across Delta programs. Evaluate technical priorities, adequacy of funding, peer review, use of outside experts, and the successes and weaknesses of investments in scientific knowledge. Evaluate progress on the development of an authoritative body of knowledge relevant to each Delta program's goals and objectives. Help identify where important gaps in knowledge or the science effort might exist, with an emphasis on considering interconnections among various Delta programs.

7. Review balance and credibility of analyses and syntheses. Provide insights as to whether the analyses and syntheses of the state of the science being applied to specific issues under the purview of the Program are balanced and credible, including insights on how to improve such analyses and syntheses in general or in the case of specific issues.
8. Identify emerging issues and significant interconnections among Delta programs. Through program reviews, help to anticipate issues and identify areas of interconnection among programs that might otherwise be missed by more specialized boards and panels; suggest solutions, where needed, to interconnecting issues (e.g., technically-based actions, workshops, reviews, program collaborations, or new research).

The Delta ISB will review activities of science programs and projects for balance, rigor, and use of best available science. Like all technical expert bodies, the Delta ISB will not make policy decisions, but will provide feedback to the Council for its deliberations. The Delta ISB will provide oversight on how to improve scientific credibility, improve research clarity, advance the debate about Delta issues, and seek better connectivity between science, management, and policy.

The Delta ISB will be expected to produce written reports on the science activities that it reviews. Delta ISB members may be asked to present reports to the Council, the Delta Protection Commission, the Delta Conservancy, planning groups, and Delta science programs. Delta ISB members also may be asked to testify on their evaluations before the Legislature or Congress. The Board will meet approximately two to four times per year. The Delta ISB consists of up to 10 members. Board membership for an individual will be for a term of five years, and up to two terms may be served.